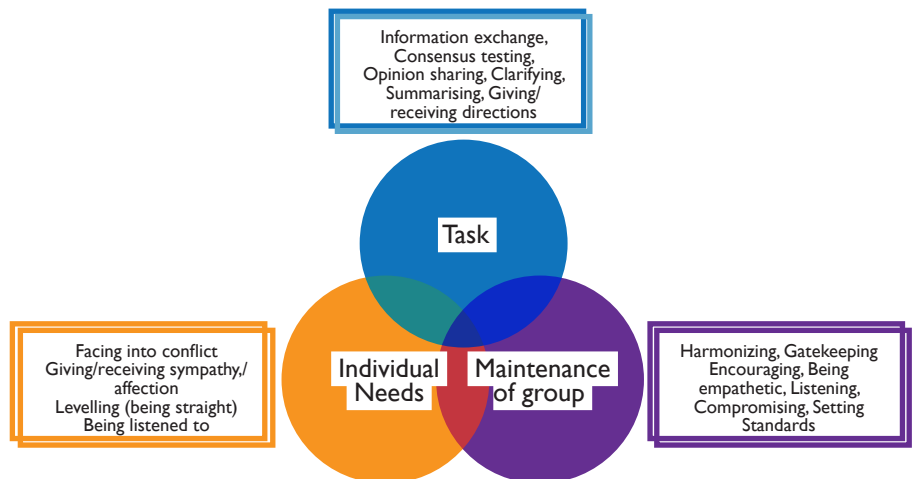


A useful way of looking at how a group works is to think about it in terms of the needs in a group: the group's task (T); the individuals (I) in the group; and what needs to be done to keep the group working successfully (M). This is known as TIM: Task, Individual and Maintenance. It is held that when task, maintenance, and individual needs are in balance then the group becomes markedly more effective and productive. However, when one or more needs are neglected, the efficiency and productivity of the group is impaired.

Group Needs (TIM)		
Task Needs	Individual Needs	Maintenance Needs
<p>We need to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Have a clear goal • Agree about the goal • Have a worthwhile goal • Get the job done • Have a plan of action to achieve the goal • Be able to recognise when the goal has been achieved 	<p>I need to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Belong • Be able to contribute • Feel valued • Have a sense that I am important and have influence • Feel I fit in <p>(See the more detailed list of individual needs immediately below)</p>	<p>The group needs to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Always be clear about what we are doing and why • Stick together to get the job done • Make sure people are able to cooperate together • Support its members even if there is some disagreement at times

Task: most groups have some task confronting them, and exist primarily to carry out that task. A danger can be that the group is so conscious of the need to accomplish this task that it neglects group maintenance and individual needs which means that people become unhappy or disaffected.



Individual: every individual member brings to a group a particular set of personal needs which impinge upon the group and its task. Frequently people aren't even aware that they bring these needs. When they are not met, group members will behave in ways which attempt to get their needs met. This behaviour can impact negatively on the group task unless it is addressed. Failure to meet individual need leads people into withdrawal and non-participation and, at this point, those members' input will be lost to the group. When a person is in a group they need to know:

- Who is in charge here?
- Who am I in this group?
- What kind of behaviour is acceptable here?
- What do I want from this group?
- What do I have to offer?
- Who else is here?
- What do people here expect I have to offer?
- Am I free to fail here?
- How are conflicts resolved here?

- How safe is it to be different here?
- Can I say what I really think?
- Will I be listened to?
- Will I have any influence here?
- Will I be accepted and liked?
- Will people trust me?
- Will I trust them?
- How free am I to really be me here?
- Will I fit with this group?



Maintenance: as people work together in a group on a task, they are also doing something with and to (and sometimes at) each other. A group needs to have a growing awareness of itself as a team, and to face the need for maintaining the relationships within it if the tasks are to be accomplished effectively.

It is possible for a group to focus all of its energy and attention on the task. This can tend to ignore the needs of individuals and the group until these are shouting for attention. However, when the task, maintenance, and individual needs levels are in balance, the group becomes markedly more effective and productive.

1 For a group to operate properly and be successful it needs to:

- Achieve a task
- Build and maintain the group
- Develop/help individuals

2 These are leadership functions. However, although it can sometimes be assumed that the group leader or facilitator is responsible for meeting all 3 types of need, group leadership is a set of functions or behaviours rather than a role. This means that any member of the team can take the lead in ensuring that the needs of the group are met. All group members have a responsibility to take on some of the functions needed to help the group work well.

Maintenance Functions (helps maintain a happy working group by improving relationships and maintaining harmony and morale)	Task Functions (helps the group complete the task and achieve aims)
<p>Encourager: warmly encourages everyone to participate; gives recognition for contributions; demonstrates acceptance of the ideas of others.</p> <p>Harmoniser/Compromiser: persuades members to analyse constructively any differences in opinions, searches for common elements in conflicts and tries to reconcile disagreements.</p> <p>Tension Reliever: eases tension and increases the enjoyment of group members by joking or suggesting breaks.</p> <p>Communication Helper: shows good communication skills and makes sure everyone understands what is being said.</p> <p>Active Listener: demonstrates that listening is taking place by clarifying and summarising, is receptive to the ideas of others.</p>	<p>Information Giver: Offers facts, ideas or suggestions to the group.</p> <p>Information Seeker: Asks for facts, ideas or opinions from others.</p> <p>Starter: Initiates action towards achieving group goals.</p> <p>Direction Giver: Develops plans on how to proceed with the task.</p> <p>Summariser: Pulls together related ideas or suggestions and re-states and summarises major points discussed.</p> <p>Diagnoser: Reveals sources of difficulty the group has in working effectively and any block to progress in accomplishing group goals.</p> <p>Reality Tester: Examines the practicality and workability of group ideas and plans.</p> <p>Evaluator: Compares decisions with the group goals.</p>
<p>Negative Functions (hinders the group and prevents effective working together whilst advancing personal gain)</p> <p>Aggression: making personal attacks on other members of the group.</p> <p>Seeking Recognition: Insists on being allowed to do a certain job.</p> <p>Withdrawing: Refusing to take part in discussion or group activity.</p> <p>Blocking: Making a contribution only on terms which other group members cannot accept.</p> <p>Competing for attention: for example, talking to a neighbour whilst another member is speaking.</p>	

FOR GROUPS TO WORK EFFECTIVELY:

- Communication needs to be open
- Members must take responsibility for their own behaviour
- Members must cooperate
- Processes for making decisions have to be established
- Problems have to be confronted openly and conflict resolved constructively

If a group member sees that the group is in trouble, then he or she can choose actively to take on one of the task or maintenance roles that will help get the group going again.